on the sensual mouth. The sodden eyes had kept something '.f the loveliness of their blue, the noble curves had not yet c- .rr.Dlvtelv uis-'Ci[4]. a^ay from chiselled nostrils, and from plastic thr--at. V.-s. it was Dorian himself. But who had done it? ITy *wrr^'I* t-i recognize his own brushwork, and the frame was "•iis or/n design. The idea was monstrous, yet he felt afraid.

He seized the lighted candle, and held it to the picture. In the h-ft-hand corner was his own name, traced in long letters of :»Hcht vermilion.

It was some foul parody, some infamous, ignoble satire. He *bad* never done that. Still, it was his own picture. He knew ft, and he felt as if his blood had changed in a moment from fire to sluggish ice. His own picture! What did it mean? Why had it altered? He turned, and looked at Dorian Gray with the eyes of a sick man. His mouth twitched, and his parched tongue seemed unable to articulate. He passed his hand across his forehead. It was dank with clammy sweat.

The young man was leaning against the mantelshelf, watching him with that strange expression that one sees on the faces of those who are absorbed in a play when some great artist is acting. There was neither real sorrow in it nor real joy. There was simply the passion of the spectator, with perhaps a flicker of triumph in his eyes. He had taken the flower out of his coat, and was smelling it, or pretending to do so.

"What does this mean?" cried Hall ward, at last. His own voice sounded shrill and curious in his ears.

"Years ago, when I was a boy/' said Dorian Gray, crushing the flower in his hand, "you met me, flattered me, and taught me to be vain of my good looks. One day you introduced me to a friend of yours, who explained to me the wonder of youth, and you finished the portrait of me that revealed to me the wonder of beauty. In a mad moment, that, even now, I don't know whether I regret or not, I made a wish, perhaps you would call it a prayer . . ."

"I remember it! Oh, how well I remember it! No! the thing is impossible. The room is damp. Mildew has got into the canvas. The paints I used had some wretched mineral poison in them. I tell you the thing is impossible."

**Ah, what is impossible?" murmured the young man, going over to the window, and leaning his forehead against the cold, mist-stained glass.

** You told me you had destroyed it."

" I was wrong. It has destroyed me."